United Nations ST/AI/2000/14

Secretariat

9 November 2000

Administrative instruction

Coordination of action in cases of death of staff members: Travel and transportation in cases of death or health-related emergency

The Under-Secretary-General for Management, pursuant to section 4.2 of the Secretary-General's bulletin ST/SGB/1997/1, and for the purpose of implementing staff rules 107.1 (a) (vii), 107.2 (a) (vii), 107.26, 207.1 (vi), 207.2 (a) (v), 207.23 and 307.1 (c), hereby promulgates the following:

Section 1
Designation of a coordinating department or office in case of death of a staff member

General

1.1 Responsibility for coordinating the actions required when a staff member dies while in the service of the Organization shall rest with the following departments or offices:

(a) The Department of Peacekeeping Operations for mission appointees or staff on mission detail. The Department may request the mission at which the staff member has died to assume coordinating authority for staff members locally recruited at that mission;

(b) The Office of Human Resources Management for staff members serving in New York, or on temporary assignment from New York, except for staff on mission detail;

(c) The personnel office responsible for the determination of separation entitlements of staff members serving at duty stations away from Headquarters, except for staff on mission detail.

Special circumstances

1.2 When the circumstances of a staff member's death or his or her position in the Organization is of such public interest as to involve the Secretariat as a whole, the Office of Human Resources Management may assume responsibility, either at its own initiative or at the request of the department or office normally responsible *under section 1.1* above.

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1.3 When a staff member dies under suspicious or unclear circumstances and/or in an accident, the senior United Nations official closest to the scene shall take charge and coordinate his or her action with the Office of the United Nations Security Coordinator. The Office of the Security Coordinator shall exercise overall authority until the investigation is concluded, at which point the coordinating department or office designated under section 1.1 shall assume responsibility.

Section 2
Functions of the coordinating department or office

2.1 The coordinating department or office shall immediately:

(a) Notify the next of kin and the officials responsible for the administrative, medical or counselling actions required. Within the authority delegated to departments and offices, responsibility for taking such administrative actions is defined by the administrative instructions on personnel payroll clearance action;[1]

(b) Designate a staff member to act as focal point for the family ("the family focal point") to assist the family of the deceased staff member in any way possible and to guide them through the process of applying for and obtaining all relevant entitlements.

2.2 The family focal point shall work closely with the Office of Human Resources Management and other offices involved. These offices shall, as a matter of priority, keep the family focal point informed of all developments in order to enable the focal point to properly assist the family and generally provide the focal point with the fullest assistance in the discharge of his or her functions.

Section 3
Travel in cases of death or health-related emergency

Medical evacuation

3.1 Travel on medical evacuation shall be authorized in accordance with the provisions of administrative instruction ST/AI/2000/10 of 21 September 2000.

Other travel

3.2 The discretionary authority of the Secretary-General to authorize travel of staff members and their eligible family members for compelling reasons under staff rules 107.1 (a) (vii), 107.2 (a) (vii), 207.1 (vi), 207.2 (a) (v) and 307.1 (c) shall be exercised as follows:

(a) In case of serious injury or illness of a staff member not accompanied at the duty station or mission area by an eligible family member, the travel of such a family member to visit the staff member may be authorized, provided that the Medical Director certifies that the condition of the staff member requires the presence of the family member and that the family member's travel cannot be covered under other official travel;

(b) In case of death of a staff member, the following provisions shall apply:

(i) Travel of an eligible family member may be authorized to the duty station or mission area to attend the burial and/or to accompany the remains to the place to which the deceased was entitled to return travel. Travel under the provisions of this subsection is without prejudice to the normal entitlement of the eligible family member to return travel on the separation of the staff member;

(ii) Alternatively, and at the request of the family, travel of a staff member other than an eligible family member may be authorized to accompany the remains to the place to which the deceased was entitled to return travel;

(c) In case of death of an eligible family member at the duty station or in the mission area, round trip travel for the staff member to accompany the remains to the place to which the deceased was entitled to return travel may be authorized.

(d) When the remains are transported to a place other than the place of entitlement to return travel, the expenses to be borne by the Organization for travel to accompany the remains under sections 3.2 (b) or (c) above shall not exceed the amount which would have been payable for travel to the place of entitlement to return travel.

Section 4
Transportation of decedents

Death of a staff member

4.1 Upon the death of a staff member for whom there is an entitlement to return transportation under staff rules 107.26, 207.23 and 307.1 (c), the family may request payment of the expenses of transportation of the body as follows:

(a) For an internationally recruited staff member, transportation may be authorized from the official duty station or the place of death to the place of recruitment, or the place of home leave, where authorized under staff rules 107.1 (c) and 207.14;

(b) For locally recruited staff members on mission detail or on travel status, from the mission area or the place of death to the parent duty station.

If the family wishes to transport the body to any other place, the expenses to be borne by the Organization shall not exceed the amount which would have been payable to the place of entitlement to return travel. The expenses for transportation of the remains shall include reasonable costs for preparation of the body.

4.2 Alternatively, the family may request the Organization to pay the reasonable costs for local interment.

Death of spouse or dependent child

4.3 Upon the death of a spouse or dependent child previously authorized to travel to the duty station under staff rules 107.2, 107.3 or 207.2, the staff member may request the Organization to pay the expenses of transportation of the remains or the expenses of local interment, as otherwise provided under sections 4.1 and 4.2 above.

4.4 The reasonable costs that may be reimbursed for preparation of the body of the deceased in New York prior to transportation or for local interment in New York shall be determined by the Assistant Secretary-General for Human Resources Management. At other duty stations, reasonable costs shall be determined by the Chief of Administration or the corresponding official.

Section 5
Final provision

The present administrative instruction shall enter into force on 1 December 2000.

(*Signed*) Joseph E. **Connor**
Under-Secretary-General for Management

Notes

[1] ST/AI/155/Rev.2 and Amend.1 of 31 August 1990 and 13 December 1990, respectively, on United Nations personnel payroll clearance action, or subsequent instructions on the same subject.